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FARM BUSINESS FACTS

A radio discussion by John Baker, Radio Service and E. J. Rowell, Agriculture Marketing Service, presented during the Department of Agriculture's portion of the National Farm and Home Hour, Tuesday, July 11, 1939.

BAKER:

Yesterday afternoon Agricultural Marketing Service issued its General Crop Report. This report tells us about crop conditions as of July first, and is based upon information supplied by thousands of farmers who live in all of our 48 States. As usual we turn to E. J. Rowell for the highlights of this report. Mike, I know that there is a lot of interest in wheat, so before you tell us about general conditions let's have a few words about the 1939 wheat crop.

ROWELL:

That's okch with me. The wheat crop of 1939 is much smaller than last year's big crop and 5 percent below average. This year's crop totals about 717 million bushels, the ten-year average is 753 million bushels. Getting into a little more detail--winter wheat production is about 4 percent below average, durum wheat about 12 percent below and other spring wheat about 7 percent below average. However, during the past month there was a lot of improvement noted in the condition of the spring wheat and in spring wheat prospects in the Northern Great Plains States and in the Pacific Northwest. In Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Illinois yields of winter wheat were bigger than expected.

BAKER:

I'm going to ask for a report on general crop conditions but right now let's hear about the corn crop.

ROWELL:

Although farmers didn't plant quite as many acres to corn this year as they did last year it looks as though production of corn would be about 1 percent larger than it was in 1938. Growing conditions during June were the kind of weather corn crop likes and it looks as though most States in the heart of the Corn Belt from Ohio to Iowa and Missouri will get yields above average. Another reason for the high yields which are expected is the large number of acres which farmers planted to corn hybrids.

BAKER:

Now Mike, for your comment on general crop conditions.

ROWELL:

Better weather conditions during June made the crops in many States look a lot better. Rainfall was more normal and the temperatures were close to seasonal all over a good share of that huge area that was feeling the pinch of acute drought conditions about 5 or 6 weeks ago. Crop prospects have improved rapidly in the North Central States and in West Virginia, Montana, Oklahoma and parts of Texas. Of course, the rain didn't come quick enough or heavy enough to save all the crops.

BAKER:

And so dry weather will mean smaller crops of some kinds.

ROWELL:

Yes, due largely to drought, the average yield of wheat and oats, barley and rye and probably the yields of tame and wild hay are each expected to be smaller than the average yields per acre during 1928 to 1937 period which includes the severe drought years.

BAKER:

Next, we should have a summary on all feed grains,--that's particularly important to the livestock men.

ROWELL:

Taking all feed grains together, farmers will probably have about 2 percent more this year than they had last year.

BAKER:

In other words, where the farmer had 100 bushels last year he will have about 102 bushels this year.

ROWELL:

Yes, that's right John. But the farmers have also got more livestock and they probably will need between 7 and 8 percent more feed than they needed last year.

BAKER:

Any other news from this crop report, Mike?

ROWELL:

Yes, lots of news in this crop report. In addition to the printed pages there are charts and graphs, maps which we wish we could talk about, show our listeners. But let me finish for the day by just saying that several of the important food crops show prospects for good yields per acre. Tobacco has made a particularly good start. Farmers are getting about 2 percent more milk than they got a year ago and that means that getting more milk than the previous high record for this time of year. According to this report as of July first, farmers are getting about 2 percent more eggs per flock than they were a year ago. Food crops promised a larger than average production. And the commercial truck crops from States that supply the July market are reported to promise production about 5 percent smaller than last year but about equal to other recent years.

BAKER:

Ad lib close.